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WSDOT Eastern Region project teams and contractors recognized

Two project engineering teams in the WSDOT Eastern Region were recently honored for their superior work in contract administration with an award presented by the Associated General Contractors of Washington and the WSDOT Headquarters Construction Administration office. WSDOT and the Associated General Contractors of Washington sponsor these annual statewide awards. The purpose is to recognize and encourage extraordinary achievement by the Contractor and WSDOT project team.

Project Engineers Bob Hilmes and Larry Eik were presented awards for Excellence in Project Administration for projects they and their teams' oversaw construction on the state highway system in Eastern Washington. The awards were presented last week at the annual AGC/WSDOT meeting in Newcastle, WA.

Bob Hilmes and his crew received the top award for their work on the US 2/Deer Road to Westwood Road paving project. Their prime contractor and partner on the project was the Inland Asphalt Company of Spokane.

Along with the usual challenges of administering a project on a major urban highway, Bob's team went the extra mile to keep the motoring public aware of construction activities. They set a good example of proactive public notification of construction activities. They set up three variable message signs, which were used to notify the traveling public of upcoming work or location of traffic control impacts. In the commercial area of the project, night paving was required to minimize impacts to businesses. The contractor also worked with the WSDOT to schedule their work in the non-peak direction, reducing the impact on commuter traffic. Another information tool used was a portable highway advisory radio system. A concerted effort was made to keep the advisory message fresh, updating it daily during the week.

Another information tool was printed construction information flyers. These were hand-delivered to all businesses and residences that fronted US 2, two weeks before the work began, with a description of the project, timelines, and contact phone numbers for the project engineer and the contractor. In addition, a project information sign with the office phone number was placed along the highway. The project was finished within the specified number of work days with costs coming in about 5% under budget.

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AGC/WSDOT Awards

Honorable mention for Eastern Washington projects over \$2 million went to Project Engineer, Larry Eik, and his team for the State Route 20/Republic to Milepost 312 paving project. Valley Asphalt and Paving of Colville was the prime contractor on the work.

The primary focus for the WSDOT and the contractor in this project was to minimize impacts to the public by completing the project in one construction. Included in this pavement resurfacing job was the replacement of three existing "box" culverts with pre-fabricated bridge structures.

The three structures on the project had a tremendous impact to the project schedule. The contractor needed to submit their own designs for these pre-cast units along with developing a construction sequence and traffic control plan that would allow for a minimum of one lane of traffic during construction.

Some very tight timelines were developed for this project. To help reduce schedule impacts, the bridge and structures office agreed to accelerate their review process. The contractor would submit plans for each structure as the designs were completed and fabrication for individual components would begin as soon as approvals were received from headquarters. Fieldwork at the site was often underway several weeks before final approvals were received.

Even with utilizing this "fast tracking" and working double shifts, it became apparent that the structures would not be completed within the fish window. The project team met with the Department of Fish and Wildlife to explain the problem to them and discuss possible adverse impacts to the environment that might result carrying this project over the winter. After evaluating these factors, the agency granted a two-week extension to the fish window to allow work to continue.

With that time extension, the contractor and sub-contractors were able to complete their work on all of the structures and finalize the prep work for paving. The contractor was also able to adjust the paving schedule to accommodate the structure work, complete all of the paving, and open the roadway to traffic within the specified working days.

Although the work took a few days longer than originally scheduled, the project came in under budget by over \$200,000.

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